

The Blessings of Receiving God's Love

A publication of
THE
ALLIANCE FOR CHRISTIAN
FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

An alliance of Bible believing Christians
seeking fellowship through a personal
loving relationship with our Lord.

We know that our Lord gives us His Love, but as with any gift—especially the gift of love—we must accept it.

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FOREWORD

There is a sweet satisfying companionship with the Lord that every believer needs every day of our lives. The scripture reveals that the secret of possessing this precious companionship is in receiving God's love and returning His love. Husbands and wives, of course, do this in varying degrees, but with God, receiving His love is special because His love empowers us to overcome our old sin nature. We then can actually return the love of the God of the universe and enter into a real exchange of love. The friendly companionship or fellowship that follows is the connection we need to receive our Lord's many blessings.

This little book is about God's blessings and the recognition that they must be received by receiving His love. It is true that we sometimes receive His blessings just because we have a great need. But to receive His many blessings, we must be connected to Him through a personal loving relationship. His love is the foundational blessing for all other blessings. When received, His love becomes a channel for all of those other blessings. With this channel of blessing, we can be and become all our heavenly Father has in mind for us in this life and the life to come. If you are a born-again Christian and want to "go on" in the Christian life, this little book is for you.

The Blessings of Receiving God's Love

The blessings of God are the manifestation of His marvelous grace and are greatly desired by all of us. But Christians everywhere have needs and desires that are unfulfilled even though they know from the Bible, that our heavenly Father loves us and is most desirous of blessing us; “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (*Eph. 3:20*). And yet, most of us settle for a bare minimum of the blessings God has stored up for us. Why is that? The answer is best exemplified in children. A teenager that has not learned to love and respect his parents has only a surface relationship with them that sometimes becomes hostile--there is very little communication between them. Without communication, there is very little guidance for a young person that is not very capable of living life successfully. The parents can put a roof over his head and food in his mouth--things that are necessary for anyone, but that is where his blessings end. Without communication, that teenager receives no wisdom or guidance or character training—things that are necessary to live life

successfully. Communication is the channel all parents need to bless their children. Well, it is not different with our heavenly Father. His great desire to bless us physically, emotionally and spiritually is frustrated by our failure to develop a personal loving relationship with Him. Without that, we are like a teenager with no communication--no channel of blessing.

There was a time in my life that I looked at God as a thing hung up in heaven somewhere. I did not realize that He is more of a person than I--that I am a person because He is a person. The Bible says that “we are made in His likeness” (*Gen. 1:26 & 27*)--that we can love and be loved by Him. To receive God’s love and love Him back is a blessed thing, but more than that, it is the greatest channel of blessing in the whole universe. With the personal loving relationship that is the result of this exchange of love, we are not only heard by God, but we can hear Him. We can then receive guidance that leads us right into the plan that He has for our lives. The Bible says that our heavenly Father has a plan for each of our individual lives. To fulfill that plan is nothing less than ultimate success in life. The

more we allow Him to lead us into His plan for our lives, the more He is able to bless us physically, emotionally and spiritually. It all begins when we receive His love and begin to return His love. Out of the relationship that follows, we can go from some blessing to abundant blessing, but we must not fail to receive God's love. Receiving God's love is the most important thing we can ever do--it is the key to knowing God personally and the key to receiving His blessings.

Receiving God's Love

Today all over America, to one degree or another, devastation occurs in families and individual lives because all of us tend to offer human love in our personal relationships. But it is God's love that produces the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which is joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (*Gal. 5:22 &23*). These are the character qualities our Lord wants us to have. Anyone of them is worth more than any price we could ever pay. Can you imagine a personal relationship between husband and wife breaking down if these

qualities are present? Certainly a teenage child would behave differently in the presence of these qualities. Many people expend a lot of energy in a great show of human love, but if they are not giving God's love, the relationship breaks down. The result is indifference, quarrels, divorce, teenage rebellion, etc. Only God's love works in this life. If it is not God's love given through His children, it is just not real. And if it is not real, it becomes a show in which we are the play actors. People everywhere spend much of their time and energy starring in a play written and directed by themselves. The play is generally about giving and receiving love-human love. The reason humanity gives and receives human love is because most people have not received God's love-we cannot give something we do not have. It is vital in all of our lives that we receive God's love so that we can love Him back and love those around us with His love.

If you are a Christian, the fact that God gives you His love is not new to you. What may be new is that you have to accept it (receive it) or it will not become yours. Suppose someone offers you a new wireless phone--a loving gift.

That phone will never be yours until you reach out and accept it and make it your own. If you think about it, that is true of any gift--especially the gift of God's loving forgiveness. The essence of salvation is receiving God's forgiveness, which is part of His love. So all Christians begin by receiving His love. If we are born again, we have already received His loving forgiveness. But to grow up in the Christian life, we must continue to receive His loving forgiveness because we continue to sin. When we receive His love, we receive Him because He is love (*1 John 4:8*). When we receive Him, we can become victorious over sin. Jesus paid the price for our sin with His life, but that was not the end of it--He was raised up (resurrected) by the power of the Holy Spirit. With His death, forgiveness of sin became available to anyone who asks for it with a repentant heart. With His resurrection, He provided victory over our future sin--when we receive Jesus, we receive His resurrected life, which is eternal and very powerful. His bloody death on that cross and His resurrected life from the grave provide us complete victory over all sin as we receive Him. When we receive Him, we are "born again"--not physical

birth, but spiritual birth--the very life of God. With this new life we have the power to do what He wants us to do, which includes the power to obey His command to forgive those who have offended us. When we do that, we are able to receive more of His forgiveness. The more forgiveness we receive, the more of Him we receive and the more of Him we receive, the more we are filled with His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit then gives us the power of His resurrected life (*Acts 1:8*). Then love begins to appear in the form of spiritual fruit, which is part of our Lord's plan for our lives. But all this is possible only as we receive more and more of God's forgiving love. Then as we begin to return His love, we have a personal relationship with Him --a channel for God's blessings.

Some of the things Jesus said about relationships were: "receive Me," "abide in Me," "come unto union with Me as I am in union with the Father" and then He said that the greatest commandment is "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (*Matt. 22:37*). That is a very close personal

relationship. It is clear that He wants us to abide in His love just as a branch abides in a vine. If a Christian, who is a branch, abides in Jesus, the Vine, through a loving relationship, he comes into union with Him and with our heavenly Father. The branch then produces the fruit of the Holy Spirit--joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. We then, to a degree, have these qualities in common with God and they become the basis of an even deeper relationship with our Lord (*John chapter 15*). It is exciting to know that the God of the universe wants to build us up in His grace to the point that we can be that close to Him. He actually makes it possible for us to obey the “greatest commandment” as we receive His love. But there is something we must do before that can happen and that is to humble ourselves (*Mic. 6:8*). Over and over the Bible says that we must humble ourselves. In *1 Peter 5:6*, it says “humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God”.

It is not possible for our hearts to receive anything or anybody if we have not first humbled ourselves. It is true that receiving

another's love promotes humility but *we must have a measure of humility to begin a loving relationship*. In the Bible, born again believers are called the bride of Christ--so the physical example that God has given us is marriage. In this life, marriage is never consummated unless the bride receives the physical love of her husband. In trusting humility, she receives him and they come into union with each other. That is exactly what Jesus wants for us. We, the bride of Christ, are to come into union with Him as He is in union with the Father (*John 17:21*). This, of course is spiritual union, but the principle is the same--union that is physical or spiritual, if it is genuine, must begin with humility. Humility is absolutely necessary to receive God's love, but He would never pressure us to be humble. If today, you were forced to be humble, you would become a robot because you would no longer have a will of your own. I think you will agree that it is not possible for a robot to enter a loving relationship. *Receiving love from another is something we must will to do in our heart--we must put aside the love and concern we have for ourselves to make room for the love of another*. God's love is all around us all the

time--if we make room, He will surely come in.

You may ask: how can I control this ego of mine and humble myself so that I can receive God's love. In his classic book, *THE IMITATION OF CHRIST*, Thomas a Kempis puts it like this: "*Never desire to be singularly praised or loved; for this belongs to God alone, who has none like Himself. Neither desire that anyone's heart should be taken up with you; nor be you much taken up with the love of anyone; but let Jesus be in you and in every good man.*" That is the exact opposite of the desire of the ego. Every one of us since the fall of Adam wants to play God on our own private stage. Our ego doesn't want to be dependent on anyone, it wants others to be dependent on us. But there is only one who is not dependent on anyone and that is God. We want to be praised and loved as somebody special even to the extent that other's hearts are so taken up with us that they will be so dependent on us that we will be "like God". Satan tempted Eve and then Adam with the idea that they could be "like God" (*Gen 3: 4&5*). If we were like God, then we would be

alike or equal to the One who created us. The truth is: we were created in the likeness or image of God. We are to be a reflection of Him--to be more and more like Him. That is far different than being equal to Him. We live in a society that competes among ourselves to be somebody special. In the course of that competition, it is decided who will lead and who will follow. The followers commit themselves to the leaders expecting to be part of a group that is "something special". Even though they are followers, they are part of the rebellion against God that began with the first man, Adam. They satisfy themselves with the idea that they are part of a group that is special ("like God") and therefore they are somebody special. This desire to be singularly praised and loved simply must be controlled in our lives because singular praise or special praise and love belong to one person and one person only--God.

Most of us lacked humility when we began our new life in Christ. For years, I was totally lacking in humility--I simply modified my thinking and my behavior and began producing my own stage play. Much later, I began to

understand that we are a new creation and that old things are to pass away and all things are to become new (*2 Cor. 5:17*). If we continue to modify our old sin nature instead of controlling it, we will still have that desire to be “like God”. As long as we allow that desire to remain, we will actually be God’s competitor and not His subject. He is the King and if we want to receive the love of the King, we must humble ourselves. As we humble ourselves, our faith rises and we become more dependent on God. We are then able to give up the desire to control people and circumstances, which had been necessary to gain the status of somebody special or part of a special group. Life then becomes more real and we see ourselves in a new and better way--not fearing what men may say, but striving to please God who loves us so. It is said that a humble person does not stoop smaller than he is; he stands at his real height seeing the reality of how small he is compared to God. When he humbles himself, he does not have to put on an act anymore because he has the real thing. He, of course, is opposed by those who do not have the real thing and experiences some form of persecution--such as a loss of friends. Jesus

said: “if they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you”. *But humility causes us to begin to fit into God’s Kingdom and into the purpose He has for our lives which is fellowship with Himself*. In trusting humility, we can open the door of our hearts to Jesus Himself and consummate our spiritual marriage to Him through a real, personal, loving relationship (*Rev 3:20*).

Simply put, any relationship is an exchange of love--the giving and receiving of love. Our Lord makes this exchange possible through the power of His love that He offers us continually. The Bible says that we can love God because He first loved us (*1 John 4:19*). Jesus holds His love out to us 24 hours of everyday--He is that available. We can receive His love anytime simply by humbly opening the door of our heart. Then through the power of His love, we have the strength to overcome our old sin nature and love Him back. Because He loves us first, we are able to do our part and complete an exchange of love. This exchange of love is similar to human relationships, but it is so much more. We, the branches, out of this union with Jesus, the Vine, can now produce

the fruit of the Holy Spirit--joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, etc. It is these qualities that tie us together with our Lord in eternal fellowship. We can be a friend of God; through this close personal relationship, we can have loving companionship and that peace "that passes all understanding" now and throughout eternity. That in itself is a giant blessing, but there is more. The communication that comes out of this loving relationship brings us into the very presence of the Lord and that produces the reverential awe that the Bible calls the fear of God. It says in Psalms 33:8, "Let all the earth fear the Lord--let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him" and in the 18th verse of the same chapter: "Behold the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His steadfast love". A close relationship with the Lord produces not only His presence, but reverential awe and hope in His steadfast love. That is a channel for a multitude of blessings from God as He keeps His eye on us.

Fear of God

Fear of God has not been emphasized very much because fear has a negative connotation in the English language. English is not as expressive as the Greek or Hebrew languages and sometimes inhibits our understanding of the scripture. *The Amplified Bible* makes up for this as it expands the meaning of fear to be awesome reverence of the Lord. Be that as it may, it is difficult to overstate the importance of the fear of God. Without that reverential awe, worship is not what it ought to be. With it, even our everyday prayer life becomes more worshipful--it transforms our prayer life to the extent that we experience a deepening of the personal relationship that we have with the Lord. In Psalms 25:14, it says "The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear Him". This verse says that we can all be a friend of God if we fear Him. Most Christians love and respect David because he was a "friend of God"--just read the Psalms he wrote and you will see why. It is because he had the fear of God. As we see our Lord with reverential awe, you and I can have the fantastic privilege of being a friend of the God of the universe--the very one

who created us. How did David come to fear the Lord? He prayed for it--you can read his prayer in Psalm 86:11, "Teach me your way O Lord that I may walk and live in your truth; direct and unite my heart to fear and honor your name". If you want to be a friend of God, you can pray a prayer like that and it will happen--maybe not in a minute, but over time it will happen because God loves you and wants to be your friend. The fear or reverential awe of the Lord is the source of much blessings. Here are just a few verses out of the Bible that promise blessings to those who fear God.

Physical Blessings

Satisfaction and Safety

"The fear of the Lord leads to life; and he who has it rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm" (*Proverbs 19:23*)

Provision for all needs

"O fear the Lord, you His saints, for those who fear Him have no want" (*Psalm 34:9*)

Riches, Honor and Life

“The reward for humility and fear of the Lord is riches and honor and life” (*Proverbs 22:4*)

Abundant Goodness

“O how abundant is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for those who fear thee”
(*Psalm 31:19*)

Taught of the Lord

“Who is the man that fears the Lord? Him will He instruct in the way that he should choose”
(*Psalm 25:12*)

Emotional Blessings

Fellowship

“I am a companion of all who fear thee, of those who keep thy precepts” (*Psalm 119:63*)

Family Life

“Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways! You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your

table. Lo, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord.” (*Psalm 128*)

Peaceful Living

“The fear of the Lord leads to life; and he who has it rests satisfied” (*Proverbs 19:23*)

Spiritual Blessings

Steadfastness

“I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts, that they may not turn from Me” (*Jeremiah 32:40*)

Friendship with God

“The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear Him” (*Psalm 25:14*)

Wisdom

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who practice it” (*Psalm 111:10*)

Obedience

“Praise the Lord, Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in His commandments” (*Psalms 112:1*)

Blessings like these surely encourage God’s children to desire the fear of the Lord in their lives. But, to relate to the Lord as a friend and fear Him at the same time appears to be something of a dilemma--but it does not have to be that way. In a personal loving relationship with someone greater and higher, there has to be recognition of who is greater and higher right up front and that is exactly what the fear of the Lord does. If we humbly relate to Him with reverential awe, a balance appears--each one relates to the other exactly as they are. God does not become lower and we do not become higher, but there is a mutual recognition of the difference. Then the power of God’s love takes over and friends begin to fellowship. If you think about it, I think you will agree that this is the kind of relationship that God wants between parents, and between parents and their children. They should be friends that fellowship together in the recognition of who is higher and who has

authority. Most of the many blessings of our heavenly Father come through a personal loving relationship--a relationship that is encouraged and maintained by the fear of the Lord. From the beginning, our heavenly Father has blessed His children with guidance called commands. The scripture says: "Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man" (*Eccl. 12:13*) That reverential awe leads to love and love leads to keeping His commandments.

Keeping His Commands

We all know that we, of ourselves, cannot keep the commandments of our Lord. This old sin nature that we all have tends to resist commands from anyone--even God. We need to stop and realize that the commands of the God of the universe are not given to prove who is boss--they are given to show us the way to go and the way not to go--the way to lead successful Christian lives. If our heavenly Father did not care, He would surely let us go our own way without any direction or guidance. But He does care--through His commands in scripture and direction He gives

for our individual lives, we can be joyful and successful in life.

However, just knowing about God and His commands does not give us the incentive to overcome our old sin nature and obey the commands of our Lord. We need a heartfelt desire to obey and that is exactly what is happening if you are receiving God's love. When we receive His love, we receive Him because "He is love" and the presence of Jesus becomes very real and we want to love Him back. The communication made possible by His very real presence and our reverential awe of Him, makes it possible to return His love. By understanding that it pleases Him for us to obey the commands that He has given so lovingly, we want to obey just to please Him even if we don't fully understand our need to obey. In this way, love is completed or perfected because there is an exchange of love--a giving and receiving of love with our Lord.

When Jesus talked about obedience, He assumed he was being loved--that His love was being received and returned--that His love was really complete. He knew that His disciples

needed that completed or perfected love before they would be willing and able to obey the various commands He had given them. He said: “if a person really loves me, he will keep my word” (*John 14:23 Amp.*). It is necessary to obey the Lord to be successful in life and to be prepared to live with Him forever. But, it is also necessary to love Him if we are to “really” obey Him. Without love, obedience is only a duty--with love, obedience brings “joy and gladness in full measure--complete and overflowing” (*John 15:11 Amp.*).

Keeping the commands of our Lord is a precious thing in the life of any child of God. But to be more and more obedient, we must learn to hear what He is saying to us.

Hearing God

All of us have a great need to hear that “still small voice” of God so that we can receive His guidance and know more about the plan He has for our lives. We need communication with Him all through the day--allowing Him to speak to us by placing His thoughts in our minds. We need to hear Him teach us as we

read the Scriptures. We need to seek to hear Him much as a child seeks the guidance of a parent.

If we are to hear God, we must humble ourselves as a little child. We try so hard to be sophisticated adults not realizing that God desires for us to be “as little children”. He does not look upon His people as sophisticated adults--if we are Christians, we are “children of God”. Of course, older children can become rebellious, but little children are naturally trusting, teachable and submissive to their parents. Is that the way you are with your heavenly Father? Or, are you a sophisticated adult?

God wants His people to be responsible for what they say and do, but He wants them to be as little children in their hearts. Jesus said, “Anyone who humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven” (*Mathew 18:4*).

The desire to be sophisticated adults makes it difficult to humble ourselves as a little child. But the way to hear God is through an on-

going Father-child relationship. We need that “Abba Father” relationship that the Bible calls the spirit of adoption or the spirit of sonship (*Romans 8:15 Amp*). We need to “work out our salvation” with fear (reverential awe) and trembling as we draw closer and closer to our heavenly Father. With a trusting, teachable and submissive attitude, we can establish that communication that comes out of a genuine fear of the Lord as we receive His love; and with praise and thanksgiving, return His love. Praise and thanksgiving always proceeds from a heart that is receiving God’s love. Then we can praise and thank Him in our thinking all during the day. Then, with that kind of communication with our heavenly Father, we can ask Him for guidance concerning the issues of our lives. Then we can begin to hear His voice, fellowship with Him and become a friend of God. That is the greatest blessing in the entire universe.

What we have been discussing is the most important thing in any Christian’s life--it is the very reason God has placed us on this planet. He is a loving person who has a need--He needs the love of His children. His love is not

complete until we love Him back. And His love is not fulfilling until we enter a continuing relationship that allows Him to bless us to the extent that we are able to fellowship with Him. It is true that there is difficulty in overcoming our old sin nature called “the flesh”, but I suggest to you that there is no other alternative if our lives are to have meaning in this life and the life to come. It may be that you are on this pathway of loving God; if not, you can depend on Him to lead you as you develop your relationship. All of our personalities are different, so there is no set way to relate to our Lord. However, there are helps in the scriptures beyond what we have discussed.

Some of them are listed below.

1. Ask the Lord for understanding and wisdom as you read the Bible.
2. Forgive everyone who has offended you whether or not they ask for it. Get rid of all known sin. Pray for the conviction of the Holy Spirit of unknown sin and receive God’s loving forgiveness. Monitor any wrong thinking and continue to receive His loving

forgiveness on a daily basis as the bedrock of your relationship.

3. Turn away from the world--be “in the world, but not of the world”.

4. Keep your mind “stayed on Him” by thanking Him in every circumstance of the day. Listen to hymns and spiritual songs when you can, and hum, whistle or sing chorus songs when you can.

5. Refuse to be moody or depressed by asking Jesus to raise His standard (the blood of the cross) against Satan and his demons and ask for His peace and His joy.

6. Get prompt forgiveness for sinful thoughts especially those produced by anger or a critical attitude.

7. Pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit everyday--pray the prayer of Jesus--that you would be in union with Him as He is in union with the Father (*John 17:19-26*)

8. Commit the day into God's hands every morning. Be aware of any thoughts or scripture that He may put on your mind. Spend time in meditation with the Lord asking Him about the affairs of the day and the things that are on your heart. Then clear your mind and listen for His "still small voice". That may take time because of the resistance of the flesh. Be aware that there are 3 persons that have access to our minds: God, the devil, and the flesh--we must sort it out using the Bible as our guide.

You may have discovered many other helpful ways to relate to the Lord--these are just a few. But, if you think about it, you will realize that the ways to relate to Him are in themselves, blessings. It seems like there is no end. But there is one more blessing that I simply must mention, and that is the blessing of faith.

The Blessing of Faith

All of us desire more faith, and we can have it by developing a loving relationship with our Lord. Is it not true that we trust and have faith in people we know, and that we have even

more faith in them when we have developed a personal loving relationship with them? Surely the answer to that question is yes! It is a personal connection with someone of good character that causes us to have faith. Well, our heavenly Father has perfect character and He already loves us. Does it not make sense to exercise the measure of faith that we already have and let it grow? As faith increases, we receive more and more of God's love and give Him more and more of our love. It becomes a wonderful cycle of love and faith. All of this is expressed in one sentence in Galatians 5:6b—it says: “faith works through love”. If we want more faith, we must allow it to “work” through a loving relationship with our heavenly Father. That is a blessing that leads to more blessings as we exercise more and more faith, and more and more of our prayers are answered. The subject of receiving the blessings of our heavenly Father through a personal loving relationship with Him is so vast—I feel we have barely scratched the surface. My goal for the future is to increase in knowledge, experience and commitment concerning this subject that is second to none in importance for a born again child of God.

My desire is to be and become all that my Lord wants me to be in this life and the life to come. In the meantime, I leave you with the personal witness of Paul the Apostle of our Lord Jesus: “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (*Romans 8: 38-39*).

This little book about receiving God's love is meant to help form an alliance of born-again Christians around the world. Through contact and fellowship, we can help each other to see more of the life changing and world changing effects as we receive God's love and love Him in return. We believe the final results will be revival in the Church. We hope that you will want to help us promote this emphasis of achieving a personal loving relationship with our heavenly Father through Jesus our Lord.

If you are interested in knowing more about the Alliance or if you would like additional literature or teaching materials, go to *www.keytorevival.org*, or write us at the address below. We welcome you in whatever way you choose to be involved.

Alliance for Christian
Fellowship International
P.O. Box 747
Burnet, Texas 78611